

THE FIRST TREATISE

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The First Part The Fountain of Christian Courage

“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might.” Ephesians 6:10

The Sum and Several Headings

St. Paul, having delivered such doctrines of faith and precepts of manners both general concerning all Christians and particular concerning the distinct degrees of several persons in a family as he thought most meet, in the closing of his epistle gives a worthy direction for the better performing of them all, which is to be courageous and well prepared against all difficulties and dangers wherewith they are likely to meet in their Christian course. Well did the apostle know that the best Christians, while here they live in this world, are both prone to faint by reason of their own weakness, and also in hazard to be foiled by reason of their enemies' power. Therefore, he takes upon him the person of a wise, vigilant captain and in soldier-like terms animates the Lord's soldiers so that they neither faint in themselves nor are daunted with their enemies.

The direction is continued from verse 10 to 20.

The parts of it are two:

1. That we be courageous, verse 10.
2. That we be well prepared, verse 11*ff.*

In the former note:

1. The manner of the apostle's exhortation.
2. The matter of the apostle's exhortation.

The manner is in these words, "Finally, my brethren."

The matter in these words, "Be strong in the Lord."

In the latter note:

1. The means, how we must be well prepared.
2. The motive, why we must be well prepared.

The means is to be well armed, which point is first in general laid down and then in particular exemplified.

The general is once declared, verse 11, and again, because of the necessities thereof repeated in verse 13, and in both places amplified by the end.

In the particular exemplified there are six spiritual graces fitly resembled to six pieces of armor.

Now because of ourselves we are as children, and no better able to wield this armor of God than David was the armor of Saul, the apostle adds that heavenly exercise of prayer, teaching them how to pray for themselves and others, especially for him who was one of their chief guides.

The motive is taken from the danger in which we are by reason of our spiritual enemies, whom he describes in verse 12. Almost every word in this direction is of weight and is worthy to be searched into.

The necessity of the point.

The first point in order is the manner of the apostle's exhortation that sets forth (1) the necessity of the thing urged and, finally, (2) the affection of him who urges it, "my brethren."

The original word translated "finally" signifies a remainder, and implies that yet there remained one necessary point to be delivered before he made an end, as if with more copy of